

An Epistolar PREFACE TO THE MARTLAND READERS.

THE publick Parliamentary Proceedings of *Maryland* have commonly been so little known to the Inhabitants of that Province, that they have scarce had any Opportunity of Judging whether they were Served or Prejudiced by their Representatives, whether their Constitution was maintained or prostituted, whether their *English* Liberties were Asserted or Neglected by them. Nay, it is to be feared, that many, who have, by an Ingenuous Honest Conversation, justly Recommended themselves to the Choice of the Electors, have not known what was the Constitution of their Country, which yet it was their Duty to Defend: This from a Supposition becomes a more than probable Truth, from what appears in the following Sheets, where even part of the Legislature seem to have so far forgot their Establishment as to raise Debates and Doubts concerning it; which is most certainly owing to the want of proper Publications of their Proceedings, which by being made Easy to peruse and often look'd into, would undoubtedly leave such Impressions in the Memory of all Concern'd, as would effectually Provide against what might prove (pray God it never may) so Fatal a Forgetfulness.

The Character of a great Commoner, so much esteemed in *England*, seems here unknown, or useless, for want of such, as, by a curious Inspection into the Proceedings of former Times, and making themselves well acquainted with all Parliamentary Proceedings and the Rights of their Country, may deserve that Character; which is likewise, in great Measure, owing to the want of Publishing the Votes of our Assemblies: But 'tis hop'd from this beginning and the provision that is made for having a Press amongst us, the Gentlemen of the Country will more readily fall upon this useful kind of Learning, since it will be thereby made so Easy to become proficient in it.

'Tis Melancholy to observe how Multitudes of Well-meaning Honest Men, for want of being thus acquainted, are misled, by the known Enemies of Liberty, to joyn with them in Notions most Destructive of their Rights. 'Tis not only Melancholy but Monstrous too that any Rational Men will be advis'd in matters of Church and State by such as are Adversaries to their Church and State. 'Tis sufficiently Obvious that some, who are so, have had assurance to Insinuate amongst their too Credulous Neighbours, that the Asserting the Ancient Constitution of this Province in these Proceedings, is an Innovation and Change of it. And artfully and with Sophistry enough, put the Question, what! Will the Assembly bring the Statutes of *England* in force here? Will they make so strange an Alteration among us? whereas the Question is really thus, Will they keep the Statutes of *England* in force here? or will they now change the Constitution from what it has ever been, by throwing them out? Will they part with the great Charters and all the Statutes of *English* Liberty to make way for the Designs of any Encroachers upon Human Freedom? Shall we fondly Exchange our Laws already made by the *English* Parliament for themselves and us, for what Laws may be made by us for our selves? Shall we part with so Valuable a Bird in the Hand? when we cannot mend our selves by what we Expect, tho' we should at vast Expence catch it at last, which yet may soar and keep above our Reach. Shall we Depart from a Constitution that has been Experienc'd with Satisfaction, ever since the first Settlement of the Province, because some Men, who seek a change themselves,